

PRESS RELEASE

Office of the United States Attorney
Western District of Wisconsin
(608) 264-5158
TTY (608) 264-5006
www.usdoj.gov/usao/wiw

For Immediate Release

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Contact Person

Elizabeth Altman
Assistant U.S. Attorney

Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Philip Schuth, age 53, of La Crosse, Wisconsin was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to eight months -- four months in prison and four months of community confinement -- for social security fraud. The time in prison will be served concurrent to a state sentence he is already serving for attempted first degree murder, first degree reckless endangerment while armed, and hiding a corpse. Following his prison term, he will be on supervised release for two years and will serve 120 days at a residential reentry center.

On April 25, 2006, Schuth pleaded guilty to this charge, which alleged that Schuth intentionally concealed the death of his mother, Edith Schuth, from the Social Security Administration by placing her in a chest freezer and freezing her corpse from August 15, 2000 to April 23, 2005. As a result of Schuth's actions, the Social Security Administration continued to pay out Title II benefits to Edith Schuth. During the period from August 15, 2000 to April 23, 2005, the Social Security Administration overpaid approximately \$35,690.

Schuth was arrested on April 23, 2005, following a standoff in La Crosse. Following his arrest, he was interviewed at the La Crosse County Jail. When asked

about his mother, Schuth explained that she had died on August 15, 2000. He concealed her death because he was afraid people would think that he committed elder abuse and had killed his mother. Schuth explained that the social security benefits, which were direct-deposited into a joint bank account in the name of Edith Schuth or Philip Schuth, were used to pay bills and buy food.

The charges against Schuth were the result of an investigation conducted by the Social Security Administration - Office of Investigations; Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; La Crosse County Sheriff's Department; Dane County Sheriff's Department - Bomb Squad; Vernon County Sheriff's Department; La Crosse Police Department; Onalaska Police Department; and Campbell Police Department. The prosecution of this case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Elizabeth Altman and Daniel J. Graber.

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